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Frederick County Health Department

# *News Release*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**DECEMBER 8, 2011**

## **DECEMBER IS NATIONAL DRUNK AND DRUGGED DRIVING PREVENTION MONTH**

**FREDERICK, MD --** The holiday season represents a time to gather and celebrate with family and friends, to enjoy each other's company, and to feast on the treats of the season. As a result, seasonal celebrations provide the greatest opportunities for impaired drivers to pose the greatest risk to our public safety. December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month, and local officials and health advocates encourage everyone to be safe and sober on the road this holiday season in an effort to prevent injury and the loss of life due to impaired driving.

During the first nine months of 2011, local law enforcement agencies reported 728 impaired driving infractions in Frederick County. During 2010, there were a total of 263 motor vehicle crashes in the county involving impaired drivers, 14 of which were fatal crashes according to the Maryland Highway Safety Office. Over the past 5 years, Frederick County has averaged 298 impaired driving

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### **3D Month / Page 2**

crashes per year. On average, males account for approximately 70% of all impaired driving crashes. Young adults between the ages of 21 – 29 represent 35% of the total number of impaired driving crashes.

“With all that is known about the dangers of drunk and impaired driving, it’s difficult to comprehend why so many impaired driving violations and crashes occur in Frederick County,” states Todd Crum, Substance Abuse Prevention Supervisor with the Frederick County Health Department. “Addressing this public health and safety issue will require all community sectors working together to design and implement a comprehensive plan to reduce the number of drivers on our roads who are intoxicated and impaired,” Crum continues.

There are steps that can be taken to prevent impaired driving during the holidays or any time of year. Avoid making alcohol the main focus of your gathering. Entertain your guests with plenty of food, games, music, dancing, and non-alcoholic beverages such as assorted coffees, sparkling waters, and fruit drinks. If alcohol is provided, be sure to offer high protein and high carbohydrate foods which slow the absorption rate of alcohol. Avoid salty foods and stop serving alcohol several hours before the end of the celebration. Ensure that all guests have a designated driver and a sober ride home.

To report suspected drunk or impaired driving, callers are encouraged to dial #77 from their cellular phones or call 911. For more information about ways to reduce impaired driving, please visit [www.stopimpaireddriving.org](http://www.stopimpaireddriving.org), [www.nhtsa.gov/impaired](http://www.nhtsa.gov/impaired) , or [www.madd.org](http://www.madd.org).

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